

'FAFUEMAS 1989' ... and the Beginnings of the University Archives

Khoo Siew Mun*

Abstract: *A Reunion and Exhibition were held in November 1989 to mark the Fortieth Anniversary of the Founding of University Education in Malaysia and Singapore (FAFUEMAS). This report describes the events, and publications issued, in conjunction with the celebrations. The Exhibits are now in the University of Malaya Archives which have subsequently been established.*

Between 29-31 August 1987, 29 of University of Malaya's 'pioneer' graduates of 1949 gathered at Penang for a reunion. A good time was had by all and at the end of that event some of those present were requested to organise the next reunion in 1989. The Convenors designated were Hamzah Sendut, Lim Chong Keat, V. Thurai-singham, R.S. McCoy, P.C. Sushama, Ivy Soh and Shanmugam Ramdas. In accordance with the wishes of the 1987 gathering, a circular was sent out to all graduates who could be located by the Convenors in May 1989. The Organising Committee for the 1989 Reunion finally comprised: Hamzah Sendut, Tan Kah Jin, Saw Huat Lye, P.C. Sushama, R.S. McCoy, B.S. McCoy, Minuira Sabki, A. Nelson, G. Leembruggen, Agoes Salim, and N. Jegathesan. P.C. Shivadas and Faridah Fung Chui Lin were invited to serve as authors of the Commemorative Volume to be published; and Khoo Siéw Mun as coordinator for an exhibition of materials on the University.

The Reunion was originally planned for 27 - 30 October 1989. This was later found to be unsuitable as it coincided with the Deepavali holidays. The Reunion was therefore fixed for 11-13 November 1989. As the weeks rolled by, FAFUEMAS (Fortieth Anniversary of the Founding of University Education in Malaysia and Singapore) became the rallying call for graduates who had been part of the University of Malaya's history from its founding in 1949: principally the alumni of the King Edward VII College of Medicine, 1905-1949; the Raffles College, 1929-1949; the University of Malaya (located in Singapore), 1949-1961. After 22 meetings and weeks of feverish activity, the Organising Committee

mounted a full programme for three days which included a barbecue, a golf tournament, a walkathon, a banquet, a forum on 'Personal Perspectives of University Education'; a visit to the University's Institute of Advanced Studies and the Museum for Asian Art; an Exhibition at the University of Malaya Library and a farewell lunch.

More than 300 attended the Reunion: it was a warm and memorable event, full of nostalgia and good cheer. The Reunion raised nearly M\$45,000 to establish the FAFUEMAS annual lecture fund. This will go towards funding a series of lectures at the Universities of Malaya and Singapore as a reminder of their common heritage and as a testimony to their concern for research, scholarship and learning. The fund will in future be augmented by proceeds from sales of some 340 copies of the Commemorative Volume -- the copyright of future editions have also been assigned by the Organising Committee to the University of Malaya.

The Exhibition

The Library, University of Malaya, was initially requested by the organisers to mount a small exhibition in the foyer of the Hyatt Saujana Hotel in Subang where most of the events were held. This was later realized to be not feasible as the foyer was a public place and security of library materials would not be assured. Moreover, as planning for the Exhibition took on a more serious aspect from September, it was realized that a big area would be necessary to accommodate all the exhibits.

*Chief Librarian, University of Malaya Library

In its eventual form the Exhibition covered three floors of the Library area and encompassed the history of the University of Malaya from 1949-1989. The history of the predecessors of the University from 1905 was also traced.

The Exhibition was officially opened on 11 November 1989 by Dr. Syed Hussein Alatas, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya and Chairman of the Library Committee. The occasion was also graced by the presence of the Organising Committee Chairman, Tan Sri Hamzah Sendut, and various members of the FAFUEMAS Organizing Committee. The official opening was attended by more than 300 guests which included participants to the Reunion, members of governing boards of the University, staff and students of the University, representatives from local universities and other government departments such as the National Archives and the National Library, and other aficionados of the University. The Exhibition was held from 11 November 1989 to 16 December 1989, during the course of which a couple of thousand visitors viewed the Exhibition as it was subsequently opened to members of the public. The Exhibition officially closed on 16th December 1989 morning with a memorable tea given by FAFUEMAS to all the library and university staff who had worked for the Exhibition. Some 120 persons were invited; and members of the Organising Committee were present. The Chairman of the Organising Committee, Tan Sri Hamzah, spoke most warmly to the gathering.

Publications

The publications issued in conjunction with the 40th Reunion are as follows.

1. *University of Malaya, 1949-1989: in Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Founding of University Education in Malaysia and Singapore* compiled and written by P.C. Shivadas and Faridah Fung Chui Lin, Kuala Lumpur, Organising Committee of the FAFUEMAS, 1989 [120 pages].
2. *Programme*. Programme of the FAFUEMAS Reunion.
3. *Let's Sing the Songs We Sang 30-40 Years Ago*. A collection of songs issued in conjunction with the FAFUEMAS barbecue held at the Hyatt Saujana Hotel on 10 November 1989.

4. FAFUEMAS Inaugural Golf Competition for Challenge Trophy: *Programme* issued in conjunction with the FAFUEMAS Golf Tournament held at the Royal Selangor Golf Club on 11 November 1989.

5. *Pameran Universiti Malaya 1949-1989: Programme* issued to mark the official opening of the Exhibition at the Library, University of Malaya by Dr. Syed Hussein Alatas, Vice-Chancellor University of Malaya, on 11 November 1989.

6. **Miscellaneous:** For the occasion, various souvenirs and materials were specially issued to commemorate the FAFUEMAS Reunion. These included the *Registration Card* for participants, which was a reproduction of the matriculation cards used in the 1950s and 1960s; special *meal coupons* for the barbecue on 10 November 1989; *menu cards* for and *invitation cards* to the banquet on 11 November 1989; *book marks* to be used in conjunction with the *Commemorative Volume*; *key chains* and special *envelopes* (in which participants' materials were inserted).

The theme *motif* for the FAFUEMAS celebrations, events and publications were the 5 crests of:

The King Edward VII College of Medicine
1905-1949;

The Raffles College 1929-1949

The University of Malaya 1949-1961

Universiti Malaya, 1962-

The University of Singapore/National
University of Singapore 1962-

The preparation for the Exhibition was a trial and tribulation, but the kind comments and warm reception given the Exhibition have made all the work worthwhile. For the staff of the Library it was an educational experience in the history of their institution. The Library is indebted to the Vice-Chancellor and the many departments on campus for making this event possible. The Library records its deep appreciation to the many organisations, donors and well-wishers who gave invaluable assistance; and especially to the Chairman and Members of the Organising Committee for their support, encouragement and generosity throughout the entire period.

University of Malaya Archives

In a sense, the preparations for the Exhibition forced the Library to take stock of its own materials on its own parent institution. Eventually, the Exhibition was instrumental in bringing together a large number and variety of documentation, publications, photographs and audiovisual materials, including a film on the University made by the Malayan Film Unit ('tiger on the spring') in 1955. The Library has faithfully made copies of all items borrowed from well-wishers. All these materials are to form the nucleus of the University of Malaya Archives, which will be lodged in a special area in the Library.

The University of Malaya Archives will bring together in one collection materials which reflect the history of the University since its beginnings in the King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1905. A preliminary classification of the materials would be as follows:

1. University of Malaya: history and description - General; King Edward VII College of Medicine; Raffles College; University of Malaya (1949-1962); and Universiti Malaya (1962-).
2. Official publications - Gazettes, Calendars, Annual Reports, special reports, Minutes, etc.
3. Governing bodies: Court, Council, Senate and their Committees.
4. Faculties/Centres/Institutes/Libraries and their publications.

5. Convocation and Registers of Graduates.
6. Residential Colleges and Non-hostelite organizations.
7. Student societies and activities.
8. Research: activities and publications.
9. Lectures: Inaugural and other endowed/distinguished lectures.
10. University Press imprints.
11. Newspaper clippings.
12. Audiovisual materials.
13. Photographic/graphic collection.

The Library takes this opportunity to appeal to all readers who may have materials, precious and ephemeral, who may wish to donate them to the Library or loan them for copying, to contact us at any time.

The University as a pioneer institution for education has contributed tremendously to all aspects of the material and spiritual prosperity of the nation. It is befitting that its history should be documented as fully as possible. It is the Library's hope and wish that the modest beginnings of the University Archives will be one of the most significant outcomes of 'FAFUEMAS 1989'. With its continued existence, the organizers of the diamond jubilee exhibition may find their task a much lighter one!

PLAN OF THE EXHIBITION

